

Road" as well as many other Beat writers; Maya Angelou's "On the Pulse of Morning;" Kingsolver's "Animal Dreams," and many of her essays, short stories and poem; Robert Prescott Allen's "Spirit in Nature" ("People now consume, control or destroy almost 40% of the plant energy of the land, and 25% of all plant energy, the ultimate source of food for all animals, and almost all organisms."); some of Thoreau's works and excerpts from them; Scott Russell Sander's "Speaking the Word from Nature" ("Where our theories of nature have become wiser, our experience of nature has become shallower.")

And due to this event, as well as our own interests, we have looked at many environmental pieces about the EPA, Earth Day and other similar activities; budget cuts and specific Acts.

We've looked for connection to environmental issues; we haven't had to look very far. In a country founded by people who relied on the land, the environment plays a major role in our history and literature. It is up to us to make sure education about the environment gets out, and that's the only way we can insure that the environment will play a major role in the future.

Okay, we made murals which are over there, on the wall. Feel free to go look at them. . .

Yes, do go look at them; we worked hard. They're just pictures—one's a pool table and one's a tree—but we put all the quotes from our own work and from all the writers that we've read that pertain to protecting the environment and what we're doing to destroy it. And so, they're all there and please, do go look at them.

As part of some of these writing assignments and readings, the environment has been a topic of concern. The new budget plans call for cuts in just about every area. The question becomes, "how much are willing to sacrifice from each of these departments?"

Our world has been misused for so long now that it is costing immense sums of money to try to clean it up. Can we really afford not to clean the land up, though? We are causing the inevitable destruction of ourselves, by destroying the natural world. The Housing Appropriations Bill would cut EPA's funding by 34%, prohibiting funding for EPA's Wetlands, Sewer Overflow, Polluted Runoff and other programs. The bill also cuts the State's Revolving Fund by \$365 million. The State Revolving Fund provides for loans to cities and counties for sewage treatment plants and other clean water facilities. This means that, without funding, communities and cities, like our own, would probably not receive assistance in addressing public health issues concerning clean water that we need.

One of the most serious shortcomings recognized by the Administration are the threats to the Clean Water Act. By cutting the last \$725 million in the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, the House eliminates the President's proposed \$1.8 billion investment for safe drinking water. The proposed bill would sacrifice America's wetland resources by stopping the President's program that would prohibit the destruction of them. The new bill would support a multi-billion dollar fishing and shell-fishing industry (signal) within those wetlands instead. These cuts can hurt only us.

When the Clean Water Act was established, there were many goals it had set to make on our lakes and rivers. . . . So far, we have yet to meet any of these goals. We are still trying to complete some of them were set to meet in the eighties. With these proposed budget cuts, the Clean Water Act will never come to live up to its potential, and our lakes and rivers will never be as clean as was hoped. We are making great progress in this area, as well as others, but with these cuts in funding, we will have to put these programs on hold, while the pollution and contamination continues to occur. Without the funding, there will be no way to stop the destruction that we, as a nation, have put so much time and effort into. We implore you to consider these things when you throw anything away. Become inspired to write a letter or to do something good and right. Without the environment intact we are nothing, and as a Cree saying says, "If you destroy the land, you destroy the animals; if you destroy the animals, you destroy the people." Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO HEROES WILLIAM RECKNER AND NATASCHA LYNN GEMAS

HON. FRANK MASCARA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share a story of two very special individuals from southwestern Pennsylvania: William Reckner, a Vietnam veteran and Head Start bus driver, and Natascha Lynn Gemas.

Last December, William Reckner rescued Natascha, age 2, from her burning Footedale home. The toddler was given a 20 percent chance of survival by admitting doctors. But after 2 months of treatment and rehabilitation, Natascha returned home. During her recovery, Mr. Reckner visited Natascha at Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh and then at the Mountainview Regional Rehabilitation Hospital in Morgantown, WV.

"The more Natasha recovered, the more I recovered," Mr. Reckner said.

I wish to join the citizens of the 20th Congressional District in saluting Mr. Reckner for his heroic effort, and ask that the story of his courage and compassion be entered in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Mr. Reckner's personal sacrifice, and little Natasha's will to live should be a constant reminder to all of us that life is indeed the most precious gift one can give.

A TRIBUTE TO JESSICA POMERANTZ

HON. DICK ZIMMER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Mr. ZIMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a young woman from New Jersey who

is a true leader in her community. Jessica Pomerantz is a 15-year-old student in Cresskill, NJ, who, among her many extra-curricular activities, has become the founder of AIDS Education Week and the AIDS Walk at Cresskill High School.

Jessica has been honored by her selfless commitment to helping a children's AIDS foundation and educating others about the deadly AIDS virus. Her dedication and hard work have also been recognized by the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly in a Joint Legislative Resolution. Jessica is an exemplary student who has been named Student of the Month by her high school, is a member of the varsity tennis team, the junior varsity softball team, the Jewish Community Center Youth Leadership Corp, the yearbook staff, the debate team and is a Spanish tutor.

I am proud to honor Jessica for her devotion to helping others. She sets a wonderful example for students across the country.

INCREASE OF THE MINIMUM WAGE

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage and efforts to increase it, have been focus of many inaccurate comments by Members in the Republican majority. Some have said that there are no heads of households supporting families on a minimum wage. Others have proclaimed, an increase in the minimum wage would cause jobs to decrease for low-skilled workers.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is—an increase in the minimum wage is the only way working Americans will be able to sustain decent living for themselves. The truth is—that 12 million Americans, most of them women, would benefit from the minimum wage increase. The truth is—that a raise in the minimum wage is the least this Congress can do for Americans, after cuts in education, Medicare, school lunches, and environmental protections.

The fact that we are even having a debate on the merits of a minimum wage increase shows that the majority cares little for those who are struggling. The majority feels the need to debate the merits of a bill that will provide extra pay that would mean 7 months of groceries, a year of health care costs, 9 months of utility bills or 4 months of housing.

We must stand strong for those who have the least. We must fight for those who are trying to better their situations through good, honest, hard work. We must be sure that a minimum wage is truly a living wage. Since businesses are enjoying record profits, we must ensure that profits are shared with the persons who made the records possible.